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FOUR YEARS IN JAPAN AND KOREA

BISHOP M. C. HARRIS



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Four Years in Japan and Korea

By BISHOP MERRIMAN C. HARRIS

The Quadrennial Report of the
Missionary Bishop for Japan and Korea
to the General Conference of 1908

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
150 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

PRINTED OCTOBER, 1908

FOUR YEARS IN JAPAN AND KOREA

THE WAR

When I entered upon my duties the Russo-Japanese war was raging. The people had consecrated their lives and all their possessions to the sacred cause of nationality. During one year and a half they were wholly absorbed in this struggle. Early in the conflict the representatives of the various religions met together in Tokyo and reached the unanimous conclusion as to the issues involved. Bishop Moore, then in charge of Japan, represented the Methodist Episcopal Church. This agreement was proclaimed to the world and produced a very happy effect. Any vestige of doubt concerning Christianity was entirely removed. The missionaries of our Church continued their work without abatement of zeal from the very beginning to the end of the war. The baptisms and conversions went on and the faith of the Church was purified by the tribulations of war. The conduct of our missionaries through this whole period was in the highest sense Christian. The effects produced upon the government and people by the conduct of the Christian Churches and the missionaries, the Army Department of the Young Men's Christian Association, and other Christian institutions were deep and lasting. All doubts as to the loyalty of native Christians were entirely dissipated. This is evidenced by the fact that the Court during the war made large donations to the Young Men's Christian Association for its Army Department, and also to noted Christian charities. Since the return of peace, in August, 1905, our Church and all the churches have enjoyed unprecedented prosperity. The past year (1907) has been the most fruitful in the past thirty years. The great conflict profoundly moved the religious sentiments of the people. In a new and significant sense thoughtful minds treat the subject of religion with great respect and seriousness. Dr. Anezaki, professor of the philosophy of religion, invited a Christian pro-

fessor to deliver a series of lectures on Christianity. The invitation was accepted. In the educational world, beginning with the Imperial University and extending down to the lower grades of schools, all give perfect respect to religion and are especially drawn toward Christianity.

The Japanese Government has removed all hindrances to Christian private schools, according recognition to every school government when requested (and not only so, but it has especially encouraged schools of academic and college grade). The government finding itself unable to supply secondary, collegiate and university privileges to her growing numbers of students, encourages all Christian schools of a high grade.

THE UNION OF METHODISM

The last General Conference approved the basis of union submitted by the joint committee of the Methodist bodies of Japan, and appointed commissioners with power to act with those representing the other Methodisms. In harmony with this action I took it for granted that the union would, during the quadrennium now ended, be carried into effect, and I shaped my conduct accordingly. After my return to Japan I carefully investigated the conditions as bearing upon this problem and as a result became convinced that the time had come to unite the various Methodisms and create a national Methodist Church. From that time forward I felt it my duty to encourage this movement.

The plan of organization as prepared by the joint Commission of the three bodies, and accepted by the General Conference of the new Church, is to be commended for its preservation of the essentials of our polity and creed, and is well adapted to the needs of the infant Church. The Methodist Church of Japan in the first year of its history finds it workable and satisfactory.

Let me say that in the treatment of this question of union in Japan—which has come before previous General Conferences—there has always been perfect respect shown and a desire manifested to grant every request which might tend to the furtherance of the kingdom. The Methodist Church of Japan has no grievance against the Methodist Episcopal Church or the two other mother Churches as touching this question. You

have granted all their prayers, and it now remains for the Methodist Church of Japan to prove their gratitude and worthiness of your continued confidence.

When the time came for me to make a decision growing out of the union of Methodisms it seemed perfectly clear to me, after conference with Bishop Cranston, Dr. Leonard, and the commissioners present, that it was my duty to continue in the relation in which the last General Conference had placed me and round out the quadrennium, and submit the question to your godly consideration. As to the New Church, I pledged coöperation and service to the fullest limit of my time and duty in relation to Korea. The General Conference was pleased to honor me with the position of Honorary, or Bishop Emeritus, and extended to me a hearty welcome to fellowship of service and bade me be at home among the churches and freely preach, baptize, and dedicate churches. At the recent Conferences Bishop Honda asked me to unite with him in the ordination services. He ordained the deacons and I the elders. Thus during the first year of the new Church our relations have been perfectly cordial, frank, and brotherly.

I take this occasion to say that the selection of Brother Honda, the first Bishop of the Methodist Church of Japan, met the approval of the Christian bodies in Japan and made a deep and favorable impression upon the nation at large. It is the glory of our Church to have furnished the first Christian Bishop ever elevated to this office in Southern or Eastern Asia.

Since his elevation to the episcopacy he has traveled, preached, lectured, and administered the duties of his office in a way that entitles him to be a successor to Asbury and all who came after him. He is a Bishop *ex natura*, and truly called of God to this office and ministry.

FORWARD MOVEMENT

It was determined at the session of its General Conference that the organization of the new Methodist Church be signalized by an evangelistic campaign lasting through two years and to be national in scope. Early in the summer the Board of Evangelization was organized and the Rev. Y. Hiraiwa made the chairman. This work began early in October and continued

until the Conference meetings in March. The pastors and members all took part, large numbers attended and over a thousand conversions took place. The Church developed *esprit de corps*, and is now deeply enthused and moved by a passion for gospelizing the nation. The two Conferences reported gains in members, conversions, and self-support; the baptisms totaled about two thousand, the biggest gain ever known. The annual sessions of the Conferences were seasons of harmony. Missionary and native preachers, as heretofore, acted together as one organic body; and imperfect as it has been from the beginning, missionary and native in the Conference never acted or voted as such, but as members one of another, and, please God, this will continue as long as missionaries remain.

In the nominations for presiding elders there was no discrimination against the missionaries. The missionaries all joined one of the Annual Conferences.

Thus far the new Church has met expectations, and I fully believe will continue to do so.

CO-OPERATION

The plan of coöperation agreed upon by the commissioners and affirmed by the Missionary Societies is vital to the life of Methodism in Japan. The Church can in a few years attain self-support, but the great question is the evangelization of the fifty millions of people. Shall they be left wholly to the new Methodist Church and her sister Protestant churches but one hundred thousand strong? Is it the will of our Lord that this course be followed? I strongly confess that until Japan become Christian a duty to help this tremendous work lies heavily upon the conscience of the Methodist and other Christian Churches.

You ask, Why, then, independence? I answer, for the more speedy evangelization of the people. Already the Anglican Church, the Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist churches had organized national independent churches. The Methodist and Catholic bodies only were excepted. The new Church exists. It begins its life under happy auspices. The mother churches have consented and have promised help; the relations of missionaries and native Christians have never been darkened by doubt. The fields are white unto the harvest. Our schools

are open to the fair youth of Japan. Our chapels and churches are filled with worshipers and inquirers. The sale of Christian literature is ever increasing. The new Buddhism is half Christian. Buddhist priests in twenty-five years have decreased to twenty thousand. Before, Confucius and Buddha (or Shakamuni) occupied the field; now Christ fills the horizon. Thirty-five years ago I hardly dared name the name of Christ. Now from the housetops the gospel is proclaimed.

JAPAN AND AMERICA

As bearing on the problem of missions, I bear testimony to the good will of the government and people of Japan. Thank God, the emigration question is settled. The cordial invitation of the emperor, his majesty, to the fleet to visit Japan has been accepted and caused universal joy. The reception to our fleet on its arrival will surpass that being given by the city of San Francisco. This will be her opportunity to show her love of peace and perfect trust in America, her oldest and best friend. The treaty of arbitration just announced is another proof that Japan seeks peace with the republic now and forever. She has come all the way to Washington to negotiate this treaty. If great in war, she is also great in peace, as witness her alliance with Great Britain, her alliances with France and Russia. Japan and Russia are now arm in arm (the new treaty between them being laid in justice, and Tokyo will be the first to accept and fulfill). O, ye Methodists, in such a time, when fifty millions of people are to be evangelized, will ye let your child, the Methodist Church of Japan, stand alone, unsupported, in her days of weakness? I know you will not. Out of your stores of experience and learning, your material riches and your sons and daughters, you will supply her lack of service.

KOREA—COUNTRY AND PEOPLE

The peninsula called Korea is ninety thousand square miles in area and contains a population of ten million souls. If the resources were developed twenty million people could easily be sustained. Korea is Little China. Her history reaches back thousands of years, and her most famous ruler was Ki Tsze, contemporaneous with King David. At times in the past she

has attained distinction in art, letters, and government. Korea was the highway of civilization from Asia into Japan and was Japan's first teacher.

President Goucher, in the year 1883, saw a vision of New Korea and heard a voice calling: "Come over and help us." He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, and by a gift of \$5,000 the Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church was opened in 1885.

PROSPERITY OF THE MISSIONS

There was no night of waiting. From the beginning the work prospered. At the last session, the Korea Mission Conference was constituted an Annual Conference, with twenty-five full members and twelve probationers, with a membership of twenty-five thousand, including probationers, and twenty thousand enrolled seekers (being regular attendants on worship), thus giving a constituency of forty-five thousand attained in less than a quarter of a century.

REVIVAL

The gains during the quadrennium have been remarkable, being the result of preparatory seed-sowing and the Epochal Revival, beginning in January, 1907. Drs. Jones and Noble have made a full report of this divine visitation. It began among the missionaries. From them it spread among the preachers, the members, and to the people at large. The stages of the revival were as follows: first the thunders of Sinai against sin, awakening and terrifying the conscience; second, the sacrifice for sin through the cross of Calvary; third, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Mount Zion.

EFFECTS

The effects following this movement are wholly good—the Church raised to a higher spiritual level, almost entire absence of fanaticism because of previous careful instruction in the Bible; not one case of insanity, but many thousands clothed in their right mind; scores of men called to the holy ministry; greater congregations, searching the Word, as many as two thousand meeting in one place for the study of the Bible; many

thousands learning to read, and making inquiries; multitudes of them pressing upon the tired missionary and native pastors, praying, "Give us to eat." I beseech you do not listen to any word suggestions of doubt as to the vitality and reality of this. Drunkards, gamblers, thieves, adulterers, murderers, self-righteous Confucianists and dead Buddhists, and thousands of devil-worshippers have been made new men in Christ, the old things gone forever.

Why is Korea becoming Christian? I could give you many reasons. We are face to face not with a theory but with a condition. What do the Koreans think of Christ? They believe that he came down out of heaven full of grace and truth, a Divine Saviour to save the world—to save Korea now. They believe that Christianity is the New Jerusalem descending from God upon them, their refuge in trouble. How strange! Not a sentence of infidel literature in the empire. If there were, no one would read it. No Koreans could ask captious questions concerning the great truths of the gospel. Our Lord came to his own and they received him not. He has come to Korea and hears only hosannas in the highest. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The first shall be last and the last first. Korea, the last of the ancient peoples to be called, promises to be the first to be chosen.

These Korean believers gather a little nearer about our Lord and love him a little more than any others. They have gone with him to prison and to death. In scenes of fire and blood, in storm and war and stress of the times, and when men's hearts have failed them for fear, these Christians have remained unmoved.

SILVER ANNIVERSARIES

As has already been shown, the actual inception of our work in Korea began in 1883; the first missionaries were appointed in 1884 and reached the field in 1885. This makes the present period one of great interest and significance. The year 1909 is to be observed as the quarter-centennial year by all the evangelical missions in Korea, a Quarter-Centennial Conference being held in the city of Seoul in September of that year. After carefully considering the matter, the Korea Conference asks that Methodism celebrate this auspicious anniversary in the his-

tory of our Church in Korea by a silver anniversary gift of \$350,000, which will include the \$100,000 now in process of collection for the reinforcement of the mission with twenty-five new men, and the sum of \$250,000 necessary for the institutions, educational, medical, and publicational, in connection with our several mission stations.

FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND SOULS

At a meeting of our pastors and preachers in Seoul the question was asked them as to the extent of our work. The answer was that our present enrollment of forty-five thousand must be multiplied by ten to express the number who to-day stand just outside the threshold of our Church in Korea, ready to accept the Christian faith if we only give them the chance. It is a matter of men and money *now*. The present conditions will not abide permanently in Korea. To-day Christianity is the national enthusiasm of the Korean people. Surely, half a million souls are worth a supreme effort upon our part as servants of the Christ who died upon the cross—yea, arose and ascended for them and for us. Are not all these things providentially related? Is not this the finger of God? The auspicious anniversary of the mission, the silver gift of our own great and prosperous people and five hundred thousand souls for Jesus Christ.

COMITY AND CO-OPERATION

Four Presbyterian and ten Methodist Episcopal Churches have agreed to coöperate for the speedy evangelization of the empire. Of the ten million population three million are assigned to the Methodist Episcopal Church; to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, one million; to the Presbyterian, six million. These divisions are not mechanical and arbitrary, but natural and workable. The missionaries are of one mind that reduplication and overlapping should be avoided. This agreement gives all-around satisfaction. There is union in Christian literature, in medical work, and to some extent in education. A union hymnal has been prepared. Thank God, the forces are being utilized to the highest extent, avoiding waste and attaining the largest results. The Methodist Missions have united in theological school work, with one hundred and forty students in training,

one of the largest seminaries for the education of ministers in Asia or the world.

NATIVE CHURCHES AND PASTORS—SELF-SUPPORT

Our pastors and churches are our joy and pride. They love our discipline and church order. They do not amend our rules, but keep them. We have a national Missionary Society which is very effective. One pastor presides over four thousand souls, with four local preachers and forty exhorters. The First Church of Seoul pays its pastor the highest salary given to a native pastor, and supports three mission churches. The Chemulpo Church is splendidly organized and is entirely self-supported. It maintains two day schools, the buildings of which have been given by that noble almoner of God's gifts, Truman D. Collins, who, when asked to send \$3,000 for the girls' school replied: "That is not enough; I will send you \$5,000."

For the endowment of these schools this church has hit upon a unique plan. Four hundred families have formed a society, each family to contribute the sum of five cents when a child is born in any one of the families. The advent of each child is celebrated by hoisting on the flagstaff, in front of the church, the school flag, a blue field with a white star—the Star of Bethlehem. On the death of a member the same amount is contributed to funeral expenses, and any balance goes to the school fund. The flag floats frequently, and one day it was run up six times. A child without parents is cared for until eighteen years of age. In the District and Annual Conferences the preachers are models of deportment and intelligent participation in all the business in hand. The native Church is eighty-five per cent self-supporting. They all give, and give cheerfully, as the Lord has prospered them. They bid fair to rival our German churches in systematic giving and in the perfect ordering of all church matters.

RELATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

The Church in Korea occupies a delicate position. It is a great power, and during the troubles of last year, guided by the missions, it stood aloof from all disturbances and held the people in order. I have no doubt that the Christians in Korea during the last year saved the lives of thousands of people by

their efforts. They are guided by the words of Christ, "Unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, unto God the things that are God's." I refer to this because it has been published abroad that our American missionaries and the Korean preachers and the Church in Korea are mixed up in politics. Such is not the case. Our missionaries in Korea give themselves absolutely and wholly to the work of evangelizing the people. They are not connected, directly or indirectly, with any domestic or any political problems. They preach the gospel. They are establishing a people in the principles of the gospel, and to this work they are ever loyal.

Just this word concerning the schools: In our own Methodist schools we have five thousand pupils and only two schools out of scores that have any school furniture—no furniture in our churches, no furniture in our schools, no tables and desks save in two of these. Such poverty of equipment cannot be found in any other mission field under the care of Methodism. The great question in Korea is the care of our splendid youth; all these children are Christians, having been baptized in the name of Christ. We have no room for those who are not Christians. Korea has really come to her birthhour, and is now reaching for the light. There are hundreds of boys and girls who will not burn the midnight oil—they burn the all-night oil. Such takes place when Christ comes—when He comes to Japan or comes to Korea.

